

## Consultation in Independent Public Schools

In September 2011, the government announced the first 26 state schools who were to become Independent Public Schools (IPSs) in 2013. In 2016 potentially another 70 schools are being sought by the department to commence in 2017 bringing the total number IPSs to 150.

As an Independent Public School more decision making is devolved directly to the school as there are fundamental changes made to the way schools are regulated under the IPS model. All industrial processes still need to be followed as per your Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and Awards etc. but the Principal and the school community will have a greater say on various decisions made at the school level.

To ensure that the voices of staff are heard in schools and that you are consulted in a meaningful way, it's important that union members get to have their say on what's being proposed.

In June 2015 the government suspended the nomination process for the 2016 cohort of IPS while it evaluated the program in Queensland. Together along with the QLD Teachers Union, United Voice and key stakeholders within the department were involved in these discussions.

In August 2016 the government responded to the evaluation by producing the **Independent Public Schools Policy Framework**.

The framework provides an emphasis on the role the IPSs play as part of the state school system.

### Consultation for the EOI process

The process since the evaluation has a far stronger mandatory consultation requirement.

We ask for delegates/(members) to consider how well their school currently consults with them on issues that impact your working conditions and entitlements.

If you work in a school where you get to have a say and are included in meaningful consultation then this will be your experiences in regards to how your school may perform as an IPSs and how you vote on whether giving your school management more

autonomy is something that is in the best interest you and of Together members at your school.

To pass **Stage 1** of the EOI evaluation one of key processes is for the nomination to be supported by union members:

- The IPS nomination for any school must be supported by QTU members, the local consultative committee(LCC) which should include a Together and United Voice representative and the
- P & C – if any of these groups does not support the nomination it will not proceed to stage 2

### Smaller schools have the option of either:

- Establishing an LCC if that is considered to be appropriate in their situation; or
- Ensuring that any decisions relating to workplace reform or workers' issues generally are made in accordance with the consultative guidelines agreed by unions and the department.

It is crucial that members work together to ensure that at schools where Principals are wanting to submit an EOI to become an IPS, the views of staff are sought, respected and valued and that staff are consulted in a meaningful way.

Consultation is the key and should be happening with the Principal, Together members and union members from both QTU and United Voice seeking to discuss any issues or concerns you may have around being an Independent Public Schools.

Should you have any concerns around the process speak with your local delegate or contact the Together office on 1800 177 244 or email [schools@together.org.au](mailto:schools@together.org.au).

### Local Consultative Committee

We also need to ensure this term that all LCCs in schools are active and union positions filled. We need to hold votes of our members to fill any gaps that exist on LCCs and train all our LCC reps together.

It is important that your LCC has the required

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number of representatives from each union on the LCC.

If this is not the case at your school, each union will need to follow the appropriate process for electing their union reps to the LCC.

The representative must be a union member of the relevant union.

## Who can be on an LCC?

- Membership of LCCs must comprise equal representation of management and union nominees.
- The size of the LCC is not prescribed but will usually be eight (four union and four management) with the QTU having two of the union positions and Together and United Voice each having a union representative. Representatives must be members of their relevant union.
- It is vital that the union nominees work cooperatively, even if some issues do not directly affect all union members.
- Management nominees and union nominees should recognise that their prime objective is to ensure that the views and concerns of all workers are brought forward and the interests of all groups are considered and protected.
- While the various employee groups are covered by separate agreements, they maintain a formal role in the functioning of the LCC and it is important to ensure that the effect of any proposal on their working conditions is considered and that they are kept informed of LCC decisions.

[You can read a copy of Togethers LCC fact sheet that has more information on LCCs here.](#)

## School Councils

Each Independent Public School must have a school council. Where there are school councils that already exist in an Independent Public School, these councils will continue until the end of their school council term. There will be no spill of these school councils.

Departmental documentation indicates that a "school council will comprise of at least six, but not more than 15 members. A school council must include at least one elected parent member and one elected staff member (the number of elected parent members and elected staff members of a school council must be equal)".

The role of the school council is:

- to monitor the school's strategic direction;
- approve:
  - plans and policies of the school of a strategic nature; and
  - other documents affecting strategic matters, including the annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for the school;
- monitor the implementation of the plans, policies and other documents mentioned above;
- advise the school's principal about strategic matters; and
- the council must perform its functions in a way that achieves the best learning outcomes for the school's students.

United Voice, Together and the QTU believe that there should be at least two elected staff members on the school council to ensure as much representation across the staff as possible. The departmental protocol encourages two elected staff representatives with one being a teaching staff member and the other a non-teaching staff member.

We are also encouraging union members who are parents in the school to nominate to become a parent representative on the school council. Staff members should not feel they can not engage as parents. It is important that we get the broadest engagement as possible with all stakeholders.

More information will be provided about the protocols for establishing a school Council in the near future.